

Lower Columbia **BUSINESS**

Regional Strategies

Three-county board struggles with complex economic choices

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representatives from Clatsop, Tillamook, and Columbia Counties are finding it tough work to sift through mountains of economic data in order to choose the region's best bet for future economic growth.

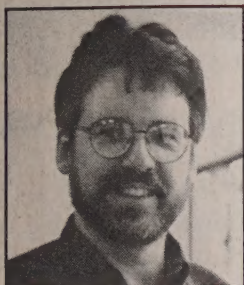
The three counties have until June to choose up to three key industries for the state's Regional Strategies Program, which funnels lottery money into economic development.

The task is complicated by one simple fact: Clatsop County in particular has seen high-paying jobs disappear, while lower-paying jobs based on a service economy and tourism proliferate. Government officials have a hard choice in picking a key industry that not only will provide reasonable pay, but will provide a good chance of actually producing those longed-for jobs through local growth in the industry.

In order to meet the state's time line, the Northwest Oregon Economic Alliance, the three counties' Regional Strategy committee, met three times in St. Helens in February and is scheduled to meet again March 4 in Tillamook to hear presentations from key industry representatives.

The key industries are aerospace, agriculture, biotechnology, environmental,

Continued on page 2.



New South Tongue Point Project Program Director:

Anthony Laska comes from New Orleans to take on the challenge of turning the Marine Environmental Research Training Station into a fiscal and educational reality. See page 18.



Photo by Jan Fletcher

Just Right: Marcela Foeste finally found the perfect location for her new floral and gift shop in downtown Astoria. See page 6.

CONTENTS:

- 4 Seaside carpeteer expands
- 8 Art gala
- 9 Toting tots
- 10 Muffler bizz
- 12 Swiss artist makes tiles
- 14 Book dreams

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Regional strategies cont'd

film and video, fisheries, forest products, high technology, metals, plastics, professional services, software and interstate tourism.

Under the previous regional strategy bill, Clatsop County joined with several other counties — Tillamook, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties — in the Oregon Tourism Alliance. The region picked tourism as the key industry, and encouraged the

state to invest Regional Strategies money in generating growth in the tourism industry. The new Regional Strategies bill, give counties the option of choosing two or three Regional Strategies. The tri-county Regional Strategies Committee will be responsible for developing a two-year action plan for this round of funding and a six-year work plan to guide future Regional Strategy investments.

The news was bad from Tom Notos, manager for port planning for the state Economic Development Department. He gave a presentation to the alliance

Feb. 18. "Astoria will have to hold on in commercial fishing. It's not going to be great. Let's face facts," he told the group.

"Holding your own for five to 10 years is one thing. Holding your own for generations is another," said Clatsop County Commissioner Don Haskell, one of the county's representative to the alliance.

Paul Visser, another Clatsop County representative on the board, suggested that if Astoria re-zoned the waterfront to allow for residential development, "you could make millions."

Notos was skeptical and pointed out that the Columbia House Condominiums, built some years ago on the river, had to leave the lights on in empty units for some time after the building was built to make people think the building was occupied. However, he did say there was some potential for recreational moorage.

Notos predicted that maritime activities would swell locally in later years, when other west coast ports reach capacity.

However, Dick Hill, the plan facilitator, pointed out in a subsequent meeting that Regional Strategies appears to emphasize immediate measurable results which, in turn, can be demonstrated to the legislature.

Visser told *Lower Columbia Business* following the Feb. 25 meeting that he would like to see Regional Strategies money used a catalyst to help industries that are just starting, such as communications, rather than delaying a decline in resource-based industries.

However Steve Fick, owner of Fishhawk Fisheries in Astoria, told the alliance during his presentation on Feb. 25 that the future of the fishing industry is very resilient, clean, adaptive, and harvests a crop with a tremendous diversity in terms of types of fish and types of value-added products. Fisheries is not just salmon, he said. He cited opportunities for expanding employment in biotechnology and fisheries, fish farming, and harvesting large biomasses of mackerel, whiting, mid-water shrimp, and inland carp.

The alliance is scheduled to hear presentations on tourism, agriculture, forest products, and the city of Astoria March 4. They will begin deliberations on which key industries to choose in March and April. ■

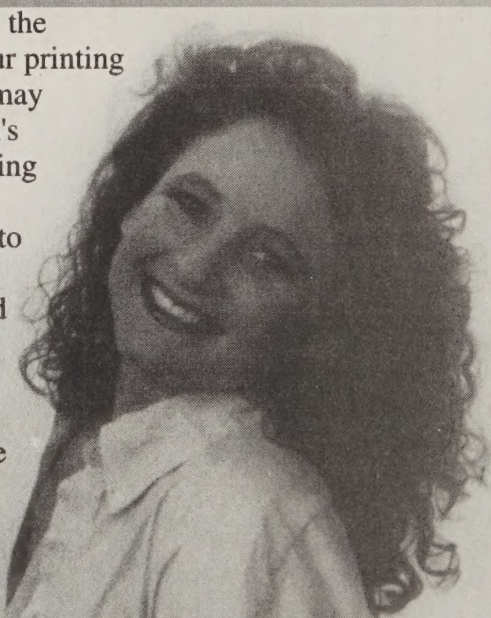
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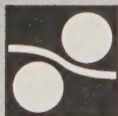
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Clatsop County releases jobs plan

Report commissioned for Regional Strategies board

Clatsop County's Jobs Development Strategy document, released in February for public comment, includes action plans for developing five areas considered most likely to generate family-wage jobs.

Targeted industries include niche visitor marketing — promoting the county's visitor industry during the off-season in specialized areas of interest; value-added wood products, such as specialty mill-working; visitor-based small business recruitment — aimed at visitors with small businesses that could be relocated; film and video production, and retirement community development.

The Clatsop Economic Development Council task force identified a number of barriers to economic development that need to be addressed, including the area's shortage of affordable housing; the current lack of air carrier service between the county and Portland International Airport; the balance between protecting and using the county's natural resources; expansion of the county's infrastructure; and the shortage of leasable commercial and industrial space, among others.

The strategy was developed by a task force that included David K. Price, Frank Little, Vickie Barrett, Janet Stevenson, Joan Pratt, and Jim Hayward.

The Oregon Economic Development Department defines a family-wage job as a permanent full-time equivalent job with a wage greater than the average annual wage in the county, and has no anticipated end at the time it is created or retained.

The average annual wage in Clatsop County in 1992 was \$20,803. Retail trade, service employment, food processing, and the finance, insurance and real estate industries offered employment with wages significantly below the average.

Two of the targeted industries rep-

resent a new focus for Clatsop County. Small business recruitment via tourism, has to date, been only a byproduct of happenstance, as when Empire Airline executives, vacationing on the coast, inquired about establishing an airline.

The report says the "types of firms that might be recruited from these visitors include both existing and start-up firms that are either locationally independent (computer software development, for example), or that would be at a locational advantage in Clatsop County (boat-building, for example)." It recommends developing strategies for identifying and targeting the visitors with links to these kinds of businesses, along with a promotional plan. "An advantage of this approach is that this group of business men and women are aware of the County's livability and scenic assets," says the report, which was prepared by local consultant Mark Barnes.

"The typical person we're seeing coming in to talk to us has the ability to relocate where ever they want. We're looking at tourism as a marketing tool to facilitate other businesses coming in," Price told the Northwest Oregon Economic Alliance Feb. 18.

Targeting retirees, says the report, would generate family-wage jobs in residential construction, medical services, retail trade and personal services. However, it notes, some jobs spawned by retirement communities pay less than a family wage, including many retail trade and service industry jobs.

The 26-page report details an action plan for each of the five target industries.

A final recommendation of the report is to find a solid funding base for the Clatsop County Economic Development Council by using lottery money, room tax dollars, or a county business license, so it can concentrate efforts on leadership and implementation of programming instead of fund raising. ■

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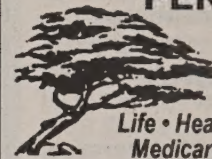
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New bizz

Wrapped in pink and blue

Seaside carpeteer continues to expand — into retail discount



Photo by Jan Fletcher

Jimmy Rogers believes in being noticed, here with a sign for his new retail discount store.

S

easide's Jimmy Rogers has a penchant for the word, "dis-

tinctive."

First there was Distinctive Carpet Care and More, then Distinctive Carpet Sales and Installations. Distinctive Shirt, Hat and Mug Shots and Distinctive Custom Window Coverings followed. Then came Distinctive Building Maintenance and Distinctive Sun Cycle Express. Lastly, came Distinctive Auto and RV Detailing and Cleaning.

So what do you think Rogers' newest business is named? Surprise! The word distinctive isn't in it — just Deals, Deals and More Deals! But the distinctive blue-and-pink paint job graces yet another building on S. Holladay in Seaside. What started out four years ago as one very noticeable, brightly painted pink-and-blue building has sprouted into almost a half-dozen buildings spread over two blocks. All in all, it's beginning to look like a pink-and-blue empire.

While some appreciate the brightness and colorfulness Rogers brings to the south end of Seaside, he is finding the operation of so many businesses a

little overwhelming. What drives him to do it?

"I guess it's the old American dream. Your limits are your own. This is America. You can go as far and fast as you want to go," says Rogers.

His newest expansions followed acquisition of a block which has been for sale for five years. "I finally got into a position to purchase it," said Rogers. He opened the auto detailing business in September, and, in January, opened Deals, Deals and More Deals!

The auto detailing business will target car dealers as well as locals and tourists.

The Deals, Deals and More Deals! store will feature hundreds of items for 99 cents. A tour through the aisles found everything from slightly dented cans of food to discounted toys and household items.

The company now has six employees, including Maureen Darling, the latest hire, who will run the Deals, Deals and More Deals! store.

"It's hectic trying to run all the businesses at this point," said Rogers. "But I'm looking forward to a really bright selling season in all aspects of the business." ■

Workforce quality

Failure to get grant means no changes for now

The North Coast Workforce Quality Committee came

back from Salem empty-handed in the first round of grants for workforce training.

The Workforce Quality Council awarded lottery-funded grants totalling \$3.6 million to six counties out of 15 who applied. The awards range from providing businesses with on-site basic skills training to assisting at-risk youth in finding and keeping a job. The grants were made Jan. 19.

The North Coast Workforce Quality Committee, which was established by mandate of the state legislature in 1992, is attempting to regroup in the face of what appears to be a resounding defeat of the group's strategic plan.

"I think we could do all of it without any money and we can be more creative and responsive without the constraints of the grants," said Jane Hill, acting chair of the group, and an employee of Columbia School District 5J.

On the other hand, Hill said, the group was disappointed with the state's awards. "People are very angry about that," she said. "Those of us in the bureaucracy, when we compete for money and we don't get it, we feel we've been abused," said Hill.

Part of the group's troubles relate to the almost total lack of private industry involvement in the committee. The legislature mandated that each workforce quality committee, as well as the state council, be chaired by a member representing private enterprise. The North Coast committee has had serious trouble recruiting members from the local business community. Previous chairs include Jan Fletcher, of Clatsop County, and Eric Pippet, of Tillamook County. Because of that requirement, Hill, as a government employee, can only serve as acting chair.

"We'd like to become more aware of

the needs of small business," said Hill. "We're looking to find ways to court the small business in a regular way. I don't think we understand the needs of the workplace."

Hill said the committee had approached local community radio station KMUN about doing a series of programs on small business.

"I don't think the answer is invented somewhere. I think we have to create it for ourselves. And when we do, we're going to be in a much better position to get grants," she said.

The group's strategic plan, approved by the state council on July 26, has three priorities:

1) Develop Workforce Resource Centers that will deliver and coordinate workforce development services to both employers and employees in the region.

2) Improve the linkage between local schools and employers and thereby increase professional and technical competencies in students prior to their entering the workforce.

3) Increase the percentage of payroll expended on employee training in the region thereby improving existing workforce competencies. ■

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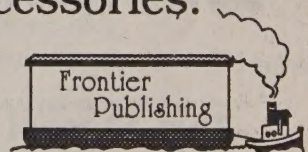
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NOTE: The general information in this column should not be acted upon without professional guidance.

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New bizz

A dream comes into flower

New florist shop long-term goal for Mexican native



Photo by Jan Fletcher

Marcela Foeste's dried flower arrangements were a big hit on Valentine's Day.

L

ocation, loca-
tion, location
— that's the
key for
Marcela

Foeste, who recently opened a flower shop on the corner of Marine Drive and 14th Street in downtown Astoria.

"I had been trying to open for a long time. Location was important. I finally found the right location," says Foeste.

The final push to open Marcela's Floral and Gifts grew out of personal tragedy. Foeste, one of 10 children in a closeknit family, lost her older brother to heart disease at the age of 40. His death convinced her that she had to try it. "I always said, even my husband said to me, it's something I've always wanted to do, to have my own business. If I don't try it, it will always be in my mind," said Foeste. Her shop opened two weeks before Christmas.

Foeste previously worked for other florists, and attended school in Portland at the Western School of Floral Design. She operated a small business from home, and was ready to go full-time into retail. When Bikes and Beyond moved last year to a larger store just down Marine Drive a few blocks away, she saw what she considered the perfect location.

***"I'm the only florist
that has a river view."***

She didn't consider the transition to be difficult because she prepared herself. Foeste researched her business thoroughly before opening the shop. "I have binders of notes," she says. "For three years, I went to Longview, Portland, Seattle, Beaverton, checking out other floral stores."

Not only does she get tremendous exposure from drive-by traffic, as well as pedestrians, her location across the street from the Columbia River gives her an added bonus.

"I'm the only florist that has a river view. There's a plus to having a view too," she said.

In order to take advantage of the summer's tourists, she plans to fix the front of the store with living plants in hanging baskets outside the shop — a garden-type enclave that beckons the passerby.

Even during the rainy season, she's had people stop in and order deliveries to be sent to their homes in California.

Her dried arrangements in the form of wreaths, bows and hearts decorate



Photo by Jan Fletcher
Marcela Foeste

the walls of her shop, but have wide empty spaces between them where nails hang marking the sale of one after another. She stays up late at night making them, and they're sold almost as quickly as she puts them on the wall.

Foeste's shop has an airy feel, with a wide selection of handcrafted dried flower arrangements, living plants, floral items, and gift basket selections.

Is she worried about competition? Apparently not. "My business is a little different. I offer almost anything for customers: Gift baskets, baby things, live plants," says Foeste. She also ventures into interior decorating, offering to make special arrangements of dried flowers to match the decor in a home or office.

"What happens with customers is they choose who they want as florists. And sometimes they want something new, something different. I don't think Astoria has a lot of florists. I'm keeping myself pretty busy. They might need another florist," she says with a little shrug of her shoulders. "I sold out of balloons and roses on Valentine's Day."

Foeste has been in Clatsop County for 22 years. Her family moved from Mexico to Brownsville, Tx. when she was 14. With her sister, she came to the North Tongue Point Job Corp center, where she graduated from the business and clerical program in 1974. "I learned to speak English there," she said.

She chose to live in Clatsop County following graduation because of its scenic beauty. "It's a nice area to raise a family. I appreciate nature. Where ever you look, there's something interesting in this area," she said. ■

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South County

Arts performing center

Seaside group hopes to convince city to fund theater plans

The Northwest Performing Arts Gala raised just a few thousand dollars in late February towards the dream of giving Seaside its own performing arts facility.

But if public pressure can be brought to the Seaside Improvement Commission to get behind the effort, then the event was a resounding success, said a spokeswoman for group.

The gala, held Feb. 23 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, brought an astounding collection of performers to the stage in a four-hour presentation. The North Coast Symphonic Band, dancers from several studios, the North Tongue Point Job Corps Center and Clatsop Community College, the Cannon Beach Chorus, local theatrical performers and singers entertained the audience, while a silent auction, sponsored by local merchants, raised money for the group.

Kathleen Wysong, secretary for Northwest Performing Arts of Seaside, said approximately \$2,400 was raised from donations and auctioned items. Following the gala, Wysong said, the group was gathering together a report to present to the Seaside Improvement Commission March 2. Petitions circulated during and after the gala supporting the acquisition of a performing arts center for Seaside were getting a good

response, said Wysong.

"All this activity is an effort to get the city's support," she said. "To let them know how many gifted people there are here."

In 1993, after receiving a grant from the Oregon Arts Commission, with matching funds from the City of Seaside, the group hired theater consultant Armand Marion. His top recommendation was that the Times Theater on Broadway be acquired and renovated for a performing arts center.

"It's a 650-seat theater. It would be great for small or large groups," said Wysong.

Rough estimates put the cost of acquiring and renovating the theater at \$1.5 million. Wysong said there are sufficient funds through urban renewal to do it, but the improvement commission has been concerned about subsidizing future operation of the facility through the general fund.

"What we've been working out is that they wouldn't have to do it. We're looking at a half of a percent room tax. That amount of subsidy would keep us going," said Wysong.

Newport continues to offer a shining example to the group, and that city's performing arts center director, as well as a previous city manager, have spoken to Seaside city leaders about the economic benefits of having a performing arts center," she said.

The conflict centers around Mayor Walt Johnson's interest in closing out the current urban renewal district and establishing a new one along Holladay.

"The mayor wants the money to go to road improvements," said Wysong. "What we basically believe is that we can do those roads as we need to. But roads are not the kind of thing to draw people here. The Times theater is the center of the current improvement district. The theater is an eyesore right now in the middle of this. It could be a focal point," she said. "It will help the whole town," she said. ■

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Toting tots in Seaside

Newly arrived couple jump into entrepreneurship with their kiddie cab service

Toting tots to and fro — that's the newest business dream

launched in February by two of Seaside's newest residents.

Jan and Gerald Wadelington, who recently moved from Ft. Lewis, Wash., arrived in Seaside in early February and quickly launched Oregon Trails Kid's Safe Ride. The business involves using a van to pick up and drop off children and seniors to individual destinations on the coast.

Rates vary from \$2.20 each way inside the city of Seaside, to \$8 each way for trips up to 25 miles. For a small registration fee, each child is issued a photo identification badge, which matches the one driver Jan Wadelington wears. Her husband and business partner, recently retired from the army, will man the dispatch. Plans to place a cellular phone in the van will complete the setup. Later, as the business grows, Jan Wadelington expects to add more vehicles and drivers.

Older children, 14-18, can call and order rides themselves, provided a parent has preauthorized use of the service, said Jan Wadelington.

She expects busy working parents to use the service as a time-crunch reliever. School, concerts, music and dance lessons, shopping areas, and extracurricular activities are just some of the places Wadelington expects to pick up and deliver small fry. The business is so new, she isn't sure how quickly it will grow, but she's optimistic that the couple has hit on a growing trend. "We're winging it," she says.

In mid-February, *The Oregonian* ran a feature story on a Portland woman who launched a similar business, On the Go Kid Express, within the past year.

Wadelington herself said the business would have been a sure hit in Tacoma. She was doing a similar service on an informal basis for the other army



Photo by Jan Fletcher

Jan Wadelington, with her daughter, Sasha, is ready to meet the needs of time-stressed parents in Clatsop County. She'll pick up and drop off children for a fee.

"There would have been a great demand there for it, but I couldn't stand to raise a family there."

families she knew. But the couple said the area was not the best place to raise their two young children. "There would have been a great demand there for it, but I couldn't stand to raise a family there, unless we were on the army post," said Jan Wadelington. So when the Gerald Wadelington left the military, Clatsop County seemed the ideal place to be.

The business is the couple's first foray into full-time entrepreneurship. Jan Wadelington had a balloon-wrapping business, a seasonal enterprise where bottles of wine or stuffed animals and other gifts are enclosed in an inflated balloon. "I've been toying with a lot of things."

Before their moving boxes were unpacked, the couple wasted no time in launching their business idea. A trip to

city hall for a business license required that they verify their plans through the Oregon Public Utilities Commission, which regulates public transport. Happily, said Wadelington, the size and type of operation exempts them from shuttle regulations. Otherwise, competing shuttle services could have prohibited the new business from starting up.

Transporting children is something Jan Wadelington is sure she will enjoy. "I really like working with children. I couldn't have child care in my house. This is a way for me to do it and get out at the same time," she said. ■



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More than just a tailpipe

Belief in people drives muffler business for Seaside's Guy Williams

Guy Williams gave up a lucrative job as a warehouseman in the Portland area when he bought Seaside Muffler in 1989, but he has no regrets.

"After four years of this, I still don't equal what I was making in wages and benefits at Fred Meyer," said Williams. "But I don't go to work anymore. I go to do something I really enjoy."

It all started about seven years ago when, after 10 years in Fred Meyer's Portland warehouse, Williams began to think there was more to life than putting boxes on shelves. At first, he simply tried moving to another warehouse, but, after a year, became dissatisfied with that job, too.

After years of working away from the public, Williams found that people were the missing element in his life. "In warehousing, I was inside the company. I didn't have to deal with customers. I thought I really liked that, but I found out from the beginning that what I liked best about business was dealing with customers," he said.

Attracted by the beach and small-town atmosphere, Williams and his family moved to Seaside in the summer of 1989. He bought Seaside Muffler, located on North Holladay in Seaside, from a friend who had lost interest in the business after losing a finger in his tubing bender. Williams has since renamed the business, Guy's Seaside Muffler.

It was quite a risk, Williams admit-

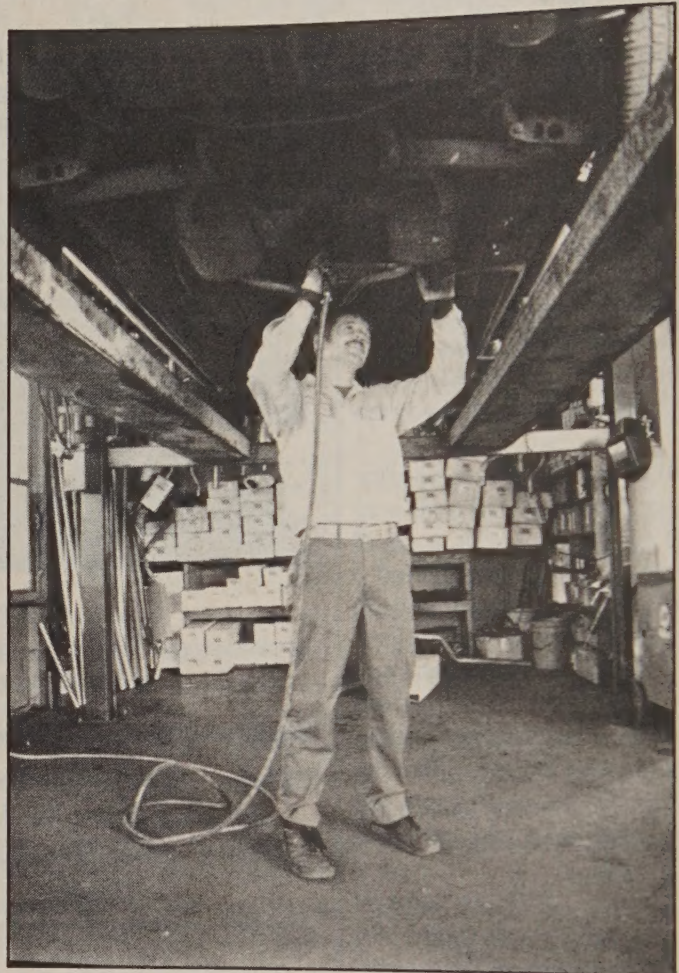


Photo by Charlie Fletcher

Guy Williams says people make his business fun.

ted. He'd never been in business for himself before, and had never run a muffler business. But he was resolute in his determination to succeed.

When the banks turned him down for a business loan, like many entrepreneurs, he used his credit cards to finance the operation. "I've got to admit, it was

pretty scary at first," said Williams. But, for Williams, it was a chance to put into action all of the ideas he'd been thinking about.

Customer satisfaction was the key element in Williams' plan. After years of watching how other businesses treated customers, Williams came to believe that

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Real Estate

Real Estate Update for Clatsop County for January:

\$ volume of homes sold:	\$5,560,649.80
# of homes sold:	48
Average Sales Price:	\$115,846.87

Property Index provided by Key Title Company.



Photo by Charlie Fletcher

Williams takes a break to practice pedaling. He's thinking of starting a unicycle club.

customer service was the primary element in business success.

At the top of that plan, he said, is doing the job right. "There's a lot of industry shortcuts I don't use. I never learned how to do it the quickest, fastest way," said Williams.

Williams only uses the top grades of muffler and tail pipe materials on his installations. The corrosive sea air can quickly eat holes in a car's exhaust system at the coast, he said.

"I've always believed that when someone comes in here, I'm going to use the very best parts I can buy. I'm not a shop for everybody. I'm no good for the beater car. But the person with a Jaguar XJ6 will know that his car will be fixed right," said Williams.

But the bottom line is a satisfied customer who will recommend Seaside Muffler to his friends, said Williams. He estimates that 85 percent of his business is generated by word-of-mouth recommendations. "Life is not about mufflers and tail pipes, it's about people, too," he said. "If somebody's not happy, you make them happy — whatever it takes."

After four years in business, Williams says he's ready to expand his operation. At present he works alone, but he's tired of turning jobs away for lack of time to do them. He hopes to add another lift and hire an employee during the next year. ■

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An artistic pursuit

Originally inspired by computer graphics, a Swiss school teacher has made a new life in Arch Cape with her relief-tile and stepping-stone business.

Ursula Ulrich lives in a gingerbread-type cottage and pours colored cement into rubber and plaster molds in her studio in the woods off Hamlet Route. The tiles, suitable for architectural use both indoor and out, and the stepping stones, which can be set in surrounding concrete or stand alone, grew from Ulrich's experience with computer art while still in Switzerland.

In 1993, she launched her business after moving to Arch Cape to tend a house owned by friends. Originally, Ulrich came to America as an exchange student in 1976, hosted by the same family that later became her friends. At that time, she lived in Juneau, Alaska. Then in 1988, she began taking care of the family's beach home in Arch Cape during the winter. In 1991, she decided to stay on full time, and now lives in a cottage on the same lot.

"I like independence, freedom, and responsibility too. Being self-employed is the best way to get that," she said. "Lately during the last few years, I've been having so many visual ideas. I have this new design, I have to do it."

Last year, Ulrich received a major commission, completing 76 relief tiles for the Maritime Memorial Park in Astoria. The park, which was dedicated last fall, offers two curved walls facing the Columbia River with granite memorial tiles to commemorate loved ones. Ulrich's tiles surround the granite tiles. Her work is also imbedded in the walkway to the memorial.

"The contract with Astoria made the business a bigger dimension than it really was," said Ulrich. "Seventy-six tiles seemed like a big amount, then I

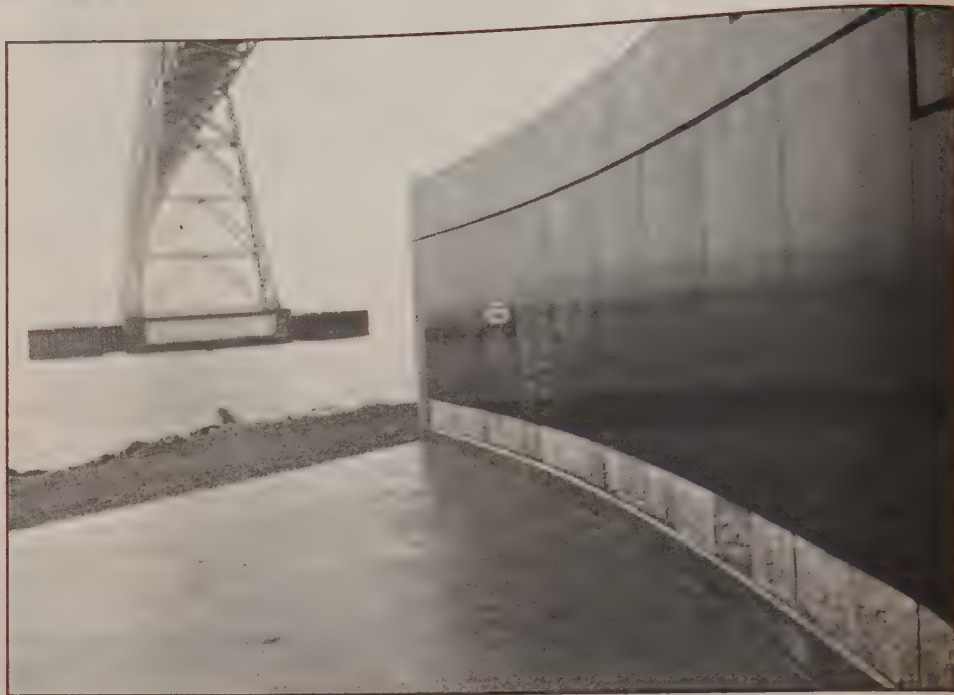


Photo by Jan Fletcher

Ursula Ulrich's tiles frame the memorials at Astoria's newly completed Maritime Memorial.

realized that I could do them easily."

In addition to the work for the city of Astoria, Ulrich recently completed a 30-inch-by-40-inch cement relief sculpture for The Pavilion, a retail shop in Cannon Beach.

These past few weeks, she has taken a hiatus from commissioned works and is organizing her business plans.

"I worked the last few months on getting my promotional flyers together," said Ulrich. "I did a lot of administrative work. Now I really want to get going and mix some cement."

Ulrich was ready to make a major change to her life when she moved to the U.S. "I wanted to take a break from teaching and do more art. Art would always be where I could escape. I was the oldest of five children. If I sometimes wanted to get away, I would go into my room and do something," she said.

"I would do tactile art with children when I was a teacher," said Ulrich. She continues to do that as a volunteer at

"They exchange ideas, communicate about art. In Switzerland, somehow art always seemed put away, stored away in museums."

Cannon Beach Elementary School.

Her inspiration is coming on fast, she says, and her mind is full of new designs. "I'm trying to be cautious. I see the future as mainly developing my own clientele for garden and fireplace stones, and working with architects. I like that perspective of being part of the whole architecture."

Relief tiles are original hand-made cement casts for interior or exterior decoration of home, business and public sites. First, Ulrich creates a design on paper. Then she carves or models it, or both,



Photo by Jan Fletcher

Ursula Ulrich poses on some of her stepping stones, gracing the entrance to a friend's cottage.

into clay. From the clay model, she makes a cast with wax or plaster. "This cast I either use as the model for the final piece or I cast a more durable rubber mold from it," she said.

The material of the final piece is usually cement, sometimes plaster. "I have developed my own formula for the cement mixture. Usually I mix one wheelbarrow at a time." She then colors the cement with earth tones: brick red, light brown, dark brown, aubergine brown, mauve, grey, black or white. The thickness of the tile varies from one quarter inch to 2 inches.

Ulrich was drawn to Clatsop County because of its many artists and scenic setting.

"Clatsop County is a really good environment for artists with the natural surroundings; and the community of artists is very supportive," said said.

"They exchange ideas, communicate about art. In Switzerland, somehow art always seemed put away, stored away in museums," she said.

Ulrich says she has always felt drawn to the sea. "That's why I'm so happy about the memorial. Working on the memorial was like saying, 'Thank you. I can live here. Thank you for the ocean.'" ■



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Uncle Sam is paid. "It's like magic. On April 16th, things start to happen," said Hansel.

Hansel came to Astoria to start the business. She had worked in social services and teaching, but with a year-old child, looked for something flexible enough to allow her to spend time with her family. She had never been in business before. "I knew a lot about books. Beyond that it was a leap — entirely precipitous," she said.

She chose Astoria because it was a community. "I feel grateful that it continues to function as a community," said Hansel. As for her flexible lifestyle, she says, "I've made a living, and not missed a ball game. Not a stunning living, but basically it has made a good life."

The name of the store reveals much about the way Hansel perceives her life's work. Parnassus was chosen not for the name of the mountain in Greece that provided court to the ancient gods, but for the book, *Parnassus on Wheels*, by Christopher Morley. The book's main character is a "messianic bookseller" — someone who believes that bookselling is a way of creating a climate of thinking, said Hansel. "Bookselling is a way to help society. I like that," said Hansel.

Hansel herself started reading at ages 3 or 4 and has consumed thousands of books during her life. "Who I am is largely a product of what I've read," she said.

Beginning April 5, Parnassus will have poetry and short story readings on Tuesday evenings. Those interested may pick up a schedule at the shop, located at 234 Tenth Street in Astoria. ■

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Collecting their due

Local credit collector says businesses can take preventive measures to ease bad debt

Judy Eskola has a memory for dates. She started with Accounts

Management Company, a collection agency and credit bureau for Clatsop County, on Oct. 17, 1977. She says Jan. 21, 1991 is when the company converted to computerized files.

She's sharp with the numbers too. Just the sort of person you probably don't want to run into when you haven't paid your bill.

Since then, the seasoned collector has probably heard just about every excuse in the universe — "trusting soul that I still am," says Eskola, with a laugh.

Whether it's a bad check, or a late payment, Eskola has the challenge of collecting those payments for local merchants.

"I think collection agencies, credit bureaus get a bad rap," she says. "One word we're called is bloodsuckers. The hardest thing is to convince people it's not my fault they have a problem," she said.

Through the years, she's had one bad scare — a man who threatened to shoot her — but surprisingly a lot of positive interactions too. One of her previous accounts called her recently to ask for advice. "Sometimes you leave OK vibes with people," she said.

During her 17 years on the job, she's seen one industry increase that doesn't harken well for local business. Bad checks are on the rise.

She holds up a stack of rubber checks. "Bad checks are a bigger problem than they've ever been," said Eskola. "It's startling, the losses grocery stores have to take. You would be astounded at check losses."

Until recently most laws have been tilted in favor of the consumer following years of reform legislation designed for consumer protection, not reimbursement for the business person. But one of the biggest changes in the offing for the industry is the ability to garnish wages from federal employees, she said.

Garnishment is an ever increasing tool for collectors. The days of personal visits and phone calls have given way to letters and court procedures.

"Nowadays, phone collecting is not all that effective anymore because everybody has an answering machine," said Eskola. "We file over 20 to 30 claims a month and most are repeaters."

Despite the challenges, Eskola enjoys her job. It feels good to finally collect that check — some merchant's rightful due. "One guy finally paid off after 17 years," said Eskola. For a long time, the judgement could not be collected because back child support took precedence. But patience paid off and Eskola renewed the judgement, collecting it when the child support had finally been paid.

"It's fine when you can find one

"I think collection agencies, credit bureaus get a bad rap. One word we're called is bloodsuckers."

that's trying to avoid you. So many get away. It's a mobile world. It's surprising how many end up in Canada and Australia," she said.

What can a small business do to avoid late paying customers? Pre-qualifying customers is important, she says, citing one flower shop that pre-checks all orders through a credit report. "He might spend \$5 instead of taking a \$15 loss," she said. A local supply company that may have orders for equipment totalling thousands of dollars to one individual account, sends applications to Accounts Management where every detail is checked. "To them it's good business sense," said Eskola.

In the worst case, if the customer skips out on a bill, the collector will have information to aid the search by reviewing the credit application's information.

"That's the main thing. Having your credit applications. It's gives them material to work with," said Eskola.

Property owners and landowners can also benefit from pre-qualifying tenants and thereby, helping to avoid costly eviction problems.

In addition to collecting debts for a percentage, the firm also issues credit reports on a fee basis. Members also receive a bimonthly public records bulletin.

The firm belongs to American Collectors International, a group which enables the firm to trace a late-payer across the globe if need be.

Despite Eskola's long career as a collector, the congenial grandmother doesn't present a frightening image. But her son, she says, doesn't let his own checking account balance dip below a triple digit. "I don't want to see you, Mom," he jokingly tells her. ■

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Setting goals

A group of local leaders wants to set up a local set of benchmarks and a progress board

Clatsop County will soon have its own progress board and a draft vision and benchmarks for its future, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Partners for Human Investment.

Many of Oregon's 272 benchmarks revolve around economic development, and the sum total reflects a measurement of the quality of life in the state. The state legislature sets the benchmarks, and a state progress board determines how well the state is achieving them. Ones that affect the economy relate to workforce training, for example, or percentage of displaced workers re-employed within 24 months.

The effort to create local benchmarks and a progress board follows an sustainable economic development conference sponsored by Clatsop-Community College and held at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center in May. Hosted by noted futurist, economist, and author Robert Theobald, the two-day event brought together 150 community leaders. Those who attended the conference proposed a list of provocative ideas for development, including targeting retirees as a business and preserving scenic qualities as an economic investment.

Following the conference, according to Larry Haskell, dean of extended learning for Clatsop Community College, a small group organized in an attempt to continue the discussion on community development.

People involved in the group include Haskell, Clatsop County Commissioners Eric Olsen and Gretchen Buckmaster, and Larry Barrows.

Olsen, who is the director of Clatsop Community Action, applied for a grant through his agency. The grant was for technical assistance as a continuation of a visioning process, according to a press release from the group. The money will finance the facilitator component, said Haskell.

Partners for Human Investment is funded by Oregon State Housing and Community Services, said Haskell. "They have a mandate by the Oregon Progress Board to help communities

develop," he said.

The grant will help Clatsop County test and refine benchmarks through geographically diverse public meetings,

Continued on page 19

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A quest for money

The new man on the South Tongue Point project has his guns aimed at those government grants

Anthony Laska hails from the very heart of academia, but his job description looks a lot like a

salesman, as he takes on the task of bringing the South Tongue Point marine center to reality.

Laska, who holds a doctorate in biological sciences, has spent years working in the environmental field. His pre-

vious jobs include director of the Wetlands Conservancy in Tualatin, and energy coordinator as well as environmental advisor to the mayor for the City of New Orleans.

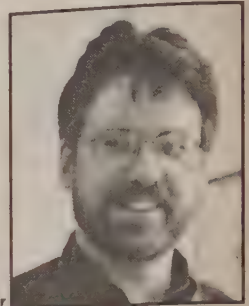


Photo by Jan Fletcher

The proposed South Tongue Point Marine Environmental Research Training Station poses a new challenge for Laska, one he says he's prepared for: shaking the money tree.

Part of Laska's job will involve grant writing and raising money to complete the center. A federal appropriation of \$2 million is considered a bare bones minimum for the center to launch its collaborative effort between three colleges: Clatsop Community College, Oregon Graduate Institute, and Portland State University.

The station is considered by the Division of State Lands to be a draw for future industrial development of the now completely pristine and undeveloped piece of land at the south end of Astoria. For the center to succeed, millions more will be needed in addition to the \$2 million. The completed project is estimated to cost \$14 million.

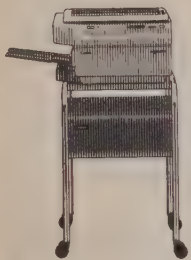
"I raised \$1.5 million for the city of New Orleans in environmental and energy-related projects," said Laska. "They were \$50,000 and \$75,000 dollar projects. You're talking a lot of projects to total \$1.5 million. That's what I bring to the table."

His past performance in raising money for governmental projects may circumvent the project's major potential pitfall: getting the money necessary to develop the remainder of the project.

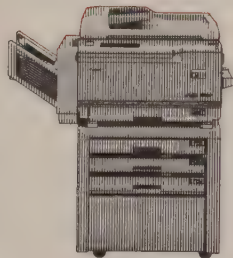
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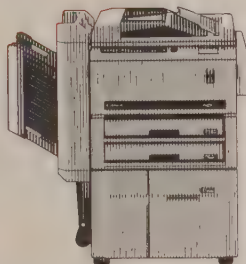
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Progress Board cont'd from page 17

prepare the final benchmark document and empower the local progress board to review the benchmarks, said Haskell.

"The thing we've gotten Partners for Human Investment to agree on, is that there may be 10 to 15 unique benchmarks that we may want to develop," said Haskell. He said that the county, as a rural community, might have some

Laska cont'd

\$2 million will get a facility, and work on the curriculum for next year. That does not provide on-going support," said Laska. "I don't know how much revenue will be generated by students, but it requires some kind of subsidy at the beginning."

Besides his previous background raising money, he's got an added reason to pitch for grants. It's a one-year position. Whether it extends or not depends on fund raising. "I've got an incentive to make things bigger and more successful," said Laska.

His other major responsibility will be developing curriculum for the training station. Laska sees great potential for a regional training center through Clatsop Community College that has the potential to draw students from a 200-mile radius.

The goal is to develop two-year programs in environmental and marine science that can fold seamlessly into four-year programs at regional institutions around the Northwest. Potential programs include hazardous material management, habitat restoration, interpreter training, environmental cleanup, and more development in the college's already extensive maritime training.

Laska sees potential in industrial internships for students — business/education partnerships, which are very much in vogue in terms of federal grants. He says the interpreter training program has potential to draw people from around the country for a one-week institute. Not just professional parks people, but amateur nature enthusiasts would also enjoy an intensive short program, said Laska. That's one reason why some plans for the training station include a small dormitory, he said. ■

benchmarks not considered important to the state as a whole, but important for sustaining local quality of life.

The reason the county needs benchmarks, said Haskell, is because the state legislature is going to be tying future funding resources to benchmarks. Those counties that go through the process of establishing benchmarks and progress boards will fare better in the competition for state dollars, he said.

"The more clearly we can articulate what our needs are going to be," said Haskell, "we should have a better op-

portunity for funding. We'll have an advantage over counties that do not have that."

Haskell said Baker County already has a progress board set up. "They saw the handwriting on the wall," said Haskell. "We're the first that Partners for Human Investment have looked at as county-wide or community wide."

The next step, said Haskell, is to bring 15 people together to develop a product that can be responded to by the greater community. ■

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MacInTax and TurboTax

MacInTax, which is designed for Macintosh computers, and TurboTax, the PC version of the software, include all the IRS-approved forms consumers need to file a 1993 federal 1040 personal tax return.

New program features make the 1993 version more powerful than ever in terms of identifying tax deductions and evaluating the impact of taxes on users' incomes. Deduction Finder hunts for deductions users may have overlooked, and TaxGraph provides graphs show-

ing users their income sources, where their tax dollars are going, their deduction sources and cash flow components.

The company has also refined popular existing elements such as the EasyStep interview system and the import function, which automatically transfers data from personal finance programs, such as Quicken.

The process begins with the EasyStep interview; an intuitive approach to tax preparation that will be especially appealing to new users. EasyStep assesses your personal tax situation by conducting an "interview" about such factors as marital status, salary and other sources of income, and major life changes, such as the birth of a child, or a move to another state. Then based on your responses, the program supplies the appropriate forms on screen for the you to complete.

In the 1993 version, EasyStep has been enhanced to make moving in and out of different segments of the interview easier than ever. You can work through the interview, accessing its comprehensive help for complex tax areas, then leave the interview to go directly to the tax forms when you don't need such

detailed help.

As you complete each form, the program instantly does all the calculations, automatically transferring them to every other appropriate form, worksheet or schedule. If you make changes, these, too, will be automatically carried forward to all appropriate forms.

After completing all your tax forms, you can take advantage of the Final Review feature to double check all figures and confirm the accuracy of the return.

To make the tax preparation even easier, MacInTax and TurboTax also come in state versions, too. Twenty state versions are available for MacInTax, and 45 version are available for TurboTax. Oregon versions are available for both programs. MacInTax and TurboTax are available from your local computer software retailer. For more information, call (800) 964-1040.

TurboTax BusinessTax

TurboTax BusinessTax is designed for small businesses tax preparation. The program, which comes in DOS, Windows and Macintosh versions, gives businesses the ability to complete one Partnership (1065), Corporate (1120) or S-Corporation (1120S) tax return.

In addition, the BusinessTax series includes ChipSoft's Tax Depreciation software, which can be used to calculate detailed asset tax depreciation and transfer the depreciation figures automatically to the 1065, 1120 or 1120S business tax returns.

The program is easy to learn and use, and makes business tax preparation as simple as possible for both new and experienced computer users. Plain-English help for tax questions, and for questions about using the software, is built in.

TurboTax BusinessTax for DOS is available from retailers and directly from ChipSoft. Versions of TurboTax BusinessTax for Macintosh and Windows are available directly from ChipSoft. Current users of TurboTax or MacInTax products may be eligible for special pricing on TurboTax BusinessTax programs. For more information, call (800) 695-7778. ■

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List your business events

Business Calendar

Call 325-8828 or fax 325-1454

March

- 14 Seaside Chamber Advertising Committee, 4 p.m.
Seaside Chamber Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m.
- 15 Astoria-Warrenton Chamber Board, Red Lion, 5 p.m.
Port of Astoria Regular Commission Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 16 Seaside Chamber New Member Breakfast, time & place TBA
North Coast Soroptimists, Seaside Pig 'n' Pancake, noon
Seaside Chamber Legislative Committee, 4 p.m.
Astoria-Warrenton Chamber Business After Hours, Wall Street Mortgage, 927 Marine, Astoria, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Warrenton City Commission, 7 p.m.
- 17 Seaside Chamber Past Presidents Committee, Ocean View Resort, 8 a.m.
Astoria-Warrenton Chamber Business Education Committee, 8 a.m.
Cannon Beach Design Review, 6:30 p.m.
CEDC General Membership Meeting, Ocean View Resort
Cocktails, 6 p.m.
Dinner, 6:45 p.m.
Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

- 18 Seaside Chamber Friday Coffee, Geri's Restaurant, 8 a.m.
Seaside Chamber Business After Hours, Small Business Development Center & Clatsop Community College South County Branch, 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Oregon Democratic Central Committee Platform Convention, Seaside Convention Center
- 21 Anchor Club Bingo, Red Lion, 6 p.m.
Seaside Chamber Ambassadors Committee, 6 p.m.
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m.
PC Users League of the Sunset Empire, 325-4873
- 22 Port of Astoria Weekly Workshop, 4:30 p.m.
Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 7 p.m.
Astoria Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m.
- 23 North Coast Soroptimists, Seaside Pig 'n' Pancake, noon
Clatsop County Commission, Seaside City Hall, 7 p.m.
- 25 Seaside Chamber Friday Coffee, Geri's Restaurant, 8 a.m.
Seaside Chamber Finance Committee, noon
- 28 Seaside Chamber Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m.
- 29 CEDC Agriculture Committee, Port of Astoria Conference Room, 1 p.m.
Port of Astoria Weekly Workshop, 4:30 p.m.

- 30 North Coast Soroptimists, Seaside Pig 'n' Pancake, noon

April

- 1 Seaside Chamber Friday Coffee, Geri's Restaurant, 8 a.m.
Clatsop County Soil and Water Conservation District, 9:30 a.m.
CEDC Transportation Committee, Port of Astoria Conference Room, noon
- 4 Astoria City Council, 7 p.m.
- 5 Port of Astoria Weekly Workshop, 4:30 p.m.
Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m.
Seaside Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m.
- 6 Astoria-Warrenton Chamber Merchants Committee, 7:30 a.m.
North Coast Soroptimists, Seaside Pig 'n' Pancake, noon
Astoria-Warrenton Chamber Fisheries Committee, noon
Seaside Improvement Commission, 7 p.m.
Warrenton City Commission, 7 p.m.
- 8 Seaside Chamber Friday Coffee, Geri's Restaurant, 8 a.m.

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News in Brief

◆ Citizens for Responsible Growth, a Seaside group opposed to a proposed factory outlet mall on U.S. 101 and 12th Avenue in Seaside, has filed another appeal in their two-and-a-half year battle against developer Centers West Development Co., of Portland.

Though the developer now says the latest appeal is "frivolous," and is threatening a counter suit, Kathleen Wysong, a spokesperson for the group, says that the group has good grounds for continuing their opposition.

"Because Citizens for Responsible Growth and other parties wanted to be sure they had meritorious grounds for continuing their opposition to the factory outlet center on Highway 101, it sought a second opinion from a prominent attorney who specializes in land use and municipal law," said Wysong in a press release. "After reviewing the briefs before the Land Use Board of Appeals and the board's decision, he concluded there was grounds for an appeal to the Court of Appeals that was not frivolous."

The appeal reflects the group's continuing concerns over traffic impact to U.S. 101, increased part-time and minimum-wage jobs, increased competition for non-existing housing, and the impact to existing and future public services and schools," said the press release.

◆ The remodeling of Providence North Coast Clinic got underway in February, and the first phase of the project is expected to be completed in three months. Phase II will begin in 1995 after the link between Providence Seaside Hospital and the clinic is complete. Included in the first phase are: demolition of dental areas which will be remodeled into exam rooms and physician offices; remodeling children's play area into a new nurses station with patient education/conference room adjacent; and enlarging the old nurses station. Funding for the remodeling is being provided by Providence Seaside Hospital's Operations budget and Sisters of Providence Health System.

◆ Columbia Memorial Hospital opened its new birthing center Feb. 2. Four labor/delivery/post-partum rooms allow mothers to remain in the same room for their entire stay. The unit also has a whirlpool tub to ease the labor process. Future plans include construction of a surgical suite for births requiring more intensive medical services. New parents will receive a diaper bag packed with new baby necessities and an elegant dinner basket for the new parents' first meal at home.

◆ Liberty Northwest Insurance Corp. announces the appointment of Frank Lemma, Jr. senior vice president of sales and marketing. Lemma was formerly president of The Risk Management Group, a Portland company. The Portland-based company employs 668 people, insures more than 225,000 workers, and operates eleven offices in Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Washington.

◆ Clatsop Community College's grand opening for its new South County Center and Small Business Development Center is scheduled for March 19. The center, located on the campus of Seaside High School in Seaside, will host a reception at 10 a.m., followed by dedication and opening ceremonies. Ken McCune, Small Business Development Center Director, and staff will offer tours from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend.

◆ It's whale-watching time again on the coast, and volunteers will be manning sites up and down the Oregon Coast. A visitor log summary from last spring's whale watching shows most visitors were from Washington from last (14,161), but 833 were from Canada, 586 from Idaho, 445 from California, and 120 from Germany, which exceeds the count from all other states, except Arizona, which had 130 visitors. Visitor log totals were 17,368. Visitor logs reflect the actual number of visitors who signed log books at 30 designated whale-watching spots.

Unemployment rate up

Clatsop County's unemployment rate for December jumped to 8.4 percent from November's rate of 7.4 percent. Seasonal factors were credited for the rise.

Fourth of July fireworks

The Warrenton Business Association is seeking donations for one of Warrenton's largest community activities — The Old Fashioned Fourth of July Fireworks. The event is sponsored by the Warrenton-Hammond Kiwanis. Call Lisa Lamping, of the association's Fireworks Committee, at 861-1200.

Quit smoking workshop

Providence Seaside Hospital will offer coastal residents a stop smoking workshop March 18-20. Patricia Allison's BreatheFree Stop Smoking Program will consist of 12 and a half hours of classroom instruction taught over four sessions, Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The Friday evening seminar is free.

Patricia Alison's BreatheFree program has taught approximately 5,000 people how to stop smoking since coming to Portland in 1980 and is now the stop smoking program for 11 medical centers in the region. According to the program's factsheet, during 1989, smoking-attributable costs in Oregon totaled over \$634 million, including direct health care costs and indirect costs due to lost productivity. Oregon Department of Revenue receipts from the state cigarette tax totaled about \$74 million. For more information, call BreatheFree at 800-600-2881. ■

Businesses in this issue

Phone numbers for businesses featured in *Lower Columbia BUSINESS* in this issue:

Deal, Deals and More Deals!, Seaside, 738-3884

Guy's Seaside Muffler, Seaside, 738-5342
Oregon Trails Kid's Safe Ride, Seaside 738-4388

Ursula Ulrich Relief Tiles and Stepping Stones, Arch Cape, 436-0737

Marcela's Floral and Gifts, Astoria, 325-6070

Accounts Management Co., Astoria, 325-5141

Parnassus Books, Astoria, 325-1363

Lower Columbia BUSINESS March 1994

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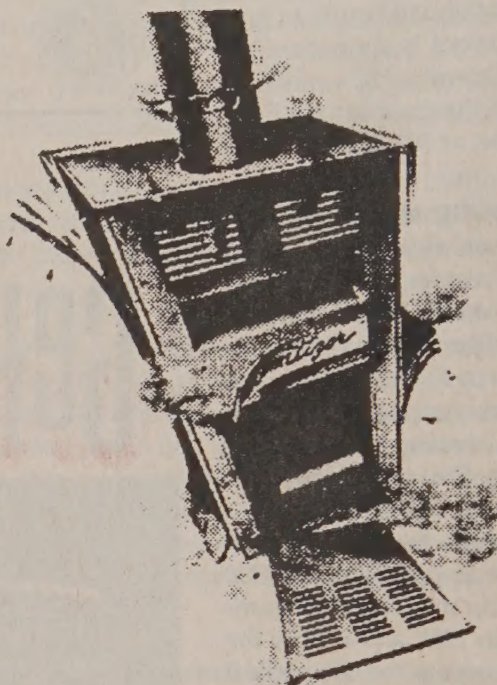
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